



Working Men's College Corporation

Board 04 July 2023, Crowndale Rd

	Appointed Governors			
1	Susan	Corby		Apologies
2	Fran	Fahey		Y
3	Neil	Garner		Apologies
4	June	Jarrett		Apologies
5	Samata	Khatoon		Apologies
6	Alexi	Marmot		Apologies
7	Tom	Robins		Y
8	Alice	Rubbra		Y
9	Guy	Shackle	Chair	Y
10	Jon	Sibson		Y
11	Max	Silver		Y
12	Paul	Smith		Y
	Dipa	Ganguli	Principal Designate	Y
	Nominated Governors			
	Maria	Rosenthal	Principal	Y
	Staff Governors			
	Amanda	Blinkhorn		Y
	Monica	Kinaswicz		Y
	Student Governors			
	Beatrice	Aguilar		Apologies
	Hein	Doan Thi		Apologies
	Officers Attending			
	Diana	Teesddale		Y
	Richard	Dearing		Y
	Bill	Barker		Y
	Others Attending		None	

Minutes approved by Chair for web-site.

1	<p>Chair’s introduction and welcome.</p> <p>Guy Shackle (GS, Chair of Governors) welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p>		
2	<p>Governance:</p> <p>Bill Barker (BB, Clerk) advised that he had received apologies from Susan Corby, Neil Garner, June Jarrett, Samata Khatoun, Alexi Marmot, Beatrix Aguilar, Hein Doan Thi</p> <p><u>Declarations of Interest</u> BB declared an interest on behalf of the staff and the Principal Designate on account of the pay award included in the budget proposed for 2023/24.</p>		
3	<p>Minutes March 2023</p> <p>These were agreed as an accurate record and recommended for signature and posting to the website.</p> <p>Matters Arising: There were no matters arising that did not form part of the agenda for this meeting.</p>		
4	<p>Strategy and Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Chair’s Introduction <p>GS commented that it had been a year of change at the College: he hoped that the next year would see a return to stability and renewed /refreshed focus on learners’ experiences and progression. He congratulated Diana Teesdale on her appointment to the position of Deputy Principal on a permanent basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Principal’s Update <p>Maria Rosenthal (MR, acting Principal) presented her report: This covered a number of areas:</p> <p><u>Enrolments and Learner Numbers:</u> The total number of enrolments had returned to pre-Covid levels:</p> <p>2017/18 = 10,625 last year of Camden AE contract, 2018/19 = 9,728, 2022/23 = 10,190.</p>		

Unique learner numbers had not returned to pre Covid levels:

2017/18 = 4,445 last year of Camden AE contract,
2018/19 = 4,182,
2022/23 = 3,523.

Learners were enrolling on a greater number of courses and the courses themselves comprised of a greater number of learning aims (hence increased enrolments).

The College had over-performed (108%) against the funding target and had been successful in its bid to have c3% consolidated into future years. The bid for Skills for Jobs for Londoners had not been successful.

The GLA's "London Factor" (rate per learning aim) currently 13% would increase to 15% in 2023/24, but overall funding volumes would not increase. This means that providers deliver contract funding levels with fewer enrolments /learners.

Governors welcomed this update and the comparison with earlier years. They asked how the complexity of enrolment patterns and learner numbers and the increased funding rate /fewer learners would impact on provision:

- number of courses,
- class size and so,
- use of accommodation.

MR and DT replied that the College had certain parameters /constraints it could apply (class threshold -viability- numbers), but that enrolment volumes depended on multiple factors including fee liability and remission levels.

MR advised that Childcare provision was not proposed to be continued. The consultation was yet to close. Amanda Blinkhorn (AB, teacher governor) expressed concern that the closure of childcare would erode the College' vocational provision, limiting learners' progression aspirations and once closed may be difficult to revive in the future.

College Improvement Plan: (CIP)

MR outlined achievements against the 1 year plan – commenting that many of these were quite operational /pragmatic but highlighting never the less the increased rigour around course planning and approvals (CFESS planning and evaluation tool made available through the offices of the FE Commissioner).

The new Strategic Plan 2023/27 would be more holistic and provide a road map for development on all aspects of the College (curriculum, learners, staff, finance and estates /accommodation).

(see item 7 – governance).

- Accountability Statement (AS)

This had been approved for submission as a draft by the CQSC: if there were any comments from the ESFA these would be notified to the Board before submission of the amended version by the deadline of 31 July 2023.

	<p>The Board approved this approach whilst also approving the AS in its current form as recommended by the CQSC.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">– CPD Day Friday 08 September – Sustainability</p> <p>This was for all College staff on Friday 08 September. The key speaker would be Steve Frampton the AoC’s sustainability lead consultant, and he had emphasized that governors’ presence would help to ensure the success and impact of the day.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the invitation to attend and asked how they might contribute to the success of the day.</p>		
5	<p>Finance Management Accounts 9 months to April 2023</p> <p>Max Silver (MS, Chair of the FPDC) advised that these accounts had been received by the FPDC and were presented to the Board for information. He would welcome any questions.</p> <p>The FPDC had noted that the College would be in deficit (c£310k) at the end of the year, and that whilst there were some one-off costs associated with the changes of senior staff, there continuing structural pressures that would be carried into future years. He informed the Board that staff costs as a percentage of income were higher than sector norms and that the growth bid for additional funding had been insufficient to cover the full cost of the over-provision. The GLA would fund up to 3% of over delivery but any monies awarded in excess of that would not be known until final ILRs (performance outcomes) for London Colleges had been returned and then analysed (November or December 2023).</p> <p>Budget 2023/24</p> <p>MS introduced the budget advising that it had been scrutinized by the FPDC and was recommended for approval.</p> <p>He drew the attention of the Board to a number of indicators:</p> <p>Operating deficit: £260k EBITDA: c7% = “good” Staff CoL increase of 2.5% from February 2024 Staff costs c 72% of income</p> <p>In response to discussion Richard Dearing (RD, Interim Vice Principal) added further detail: The “adjusted” current ratio and level of borrowings were further indicators of overall financial health.</p>		

	<p>Any relaxation (de-restriction) of the reserves associated with the playing field would not have any effect on the automated financial health assessment rating but would strengthen the basis on which the Board could express its “going concern” assessment (and have impact on the ESFA’s judgement?????)</p> <p>The Budget was approved for submission to the ESFA.</p>		
6	<p>Estates: Update</p> <p>GS introduced this item advising that the FPDC had discussed these matters on 21 June and subsequently on 28 June.</p> <p>A number of works were known as needed to be undertaken, and a further number were likely to be added on receipt of the conditions survey.</p> <p>In all cases the availability of grant funding (quantum / time limits and match funding) was a significant factor in decisions about whether and when to proceed. There were also limited (holiday / summer) periods in which works involving noise or debris could be conducted.</p> <p>The most pressing project was the library refurbishment and the conditions of associated GLA funding: the College had planning consent and a contractor ready to start in the next few weeks.</p> <p>Governors decided to return to this matter at a further meeting in the following week once further work on cost (value engineering), funding (clarifications from the GLA) and the conditions survey were available. (a note of the meeting is appended).</p> <p>Governors were pleased to note that a “lending library” facility could be provided during the course of the works so that learners’ access to books and other materials most relevant to their courses would not be compromised.</p> <p><u>Other matters:</u></p> <p>No 44 Crowndale Rd: Fire door replacement, disabled lift at main entrance, learning pods, sky-light in ALS office adjacent to OLC.</p> <p>Kentish Town: Leased “at will” from Camden Council.</p> <p>No 48 Crowndale Rd (investment property - residential flats)</p> <p>The Audit Committee would receive a risk assessment of fire door refurbishment programme and fire evacuation arrangements for learners unable to follow normal evacuation routes.</p>		
7	<p>Governance 2</p> <p><u>Membership</u></p> <p><u>New Governors - update:</u></p> <p>4 interested persons but only one application to date. (AA, JS, VB, DT):</p>		

under continued recruitment with FE Commissioner's recommendation for support from Peridot.

3 roles:

- Commercial law:
- Digital and marketing / employer engagement:
- Risk management and audit.

Renewals: new terms of office:

- June Jarrett for third term,
Susan Corby, Neil Garner for second term

Chair of the AC: Tom Robins

Co-opted member of the Audit Committee: Cameron Walkinshaw

Dates September – December 2023

Strategy Day: Saturday 7 October 10:30 – 14:00

**Recommendation: Dates and Membership, Chair of AC, co-opted member.
This was agreed.**

Board Review – Context:

- Mosaic – proposals
- Board Self Assessment 2022/23
- 2023/24 - external review (Skills Act)
- Standing Orders (annual review)

Mosaic:

Mosaic Overview:

WMC is in a strong position to be more ambitious.

The Board needs to consider how to achieve more:

Recommendation 2:

- **That the Board adopts the recommendations below:
Strategic Plan, Board Improvement,**
- **That the Board commissions a formal external review in early 2024.**

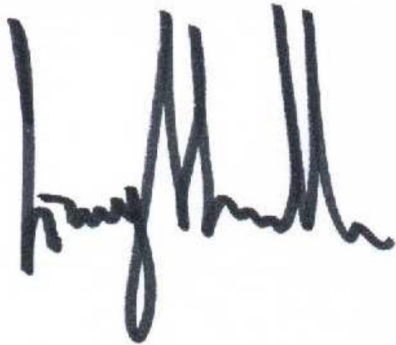
Strategic Plan 2023 –2026 – to include:

WM College: Mission and Values

EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Breadth of Curriculum (responsiveness), – Learner voice, experience and Safeguarding – Quality and outcomes – Partnerships (IALs, community /voluntary /public /commercial organisations and employers) – Financial resilience and sustainability – Estates Strategy: – Environmental sustainability <p>To be developed in Autumn 2023 – consultation with learners, staff and wider community.</p> <p>CIP, Accountability Statement, Action Plans and Risk Register to be linked and referenced to the above paragraphs</p> <p><u>Board Improvement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Additional “meetings” of Board: a September “new year” event, and a spring strategy session – Review of committee business cycle, agendas and meeting management to make available time for discussion. – Member “appraisals”: use of specialist skills and interests. – Student governors’ role and use of Alumni – Publicity, Marketing, Employer Engagement, Course Sponsorship and Fundraising: “a bigger splash” - 		
8	Committee Minutes		
	<p><u>Audit Committee.</u></p> <p>Paul Smith (PS, Chair of Audit) advised the board of the internal audit arrangements proposed for 2023/24: The College would continue the engagement of Scrutton Bland as internal audit providers for 2023/24: their programme of work would be augmented by specialist providers on occasions where the AC deemed that vfm and specialist advice might be better achieved through the engagement of another party.</p> <p>The College’s cyber security arrangements would be assessed by JISC later in July 2023. The AC would then determine how the College should proceed to gain base-line accreditation (“essentials”) and further cyber security assurances.</p> <p>The External Audit Service would be re-tendered in time for the 2024/25 cycle.</p>		

	<p>CQSC</p> <p>Jon Sibson (JS, Chair of the CQSC) introduced this item. He advised that the Accountability Statement (AS), as reported by the Principal, had been sent to the ESFA. If there were any changes proposed by the ESFA a further AS would be circulated to members of the Board for consideration.</p> <p>The Committee had received the Matrix report and an Ofsted position statement. A principal item of business had been discussion of an Employer Engagement Strategy and implementation plan. This had been welcomed by the Committee.</p> <p>JS reported that June Jarrett (JJ, vice-chair CQSC and safeguarding lead) had visited the College and had forwarded a very positive report on the range of services to support learners and confirming that the SCR continued to be maintained in a single digital space.</p>		
	<p>FPDC</p> <p>Max Silver (MS, Chair of the FPDC) advised that the meeting had considered the budget (see above) and estates matters (see above).</p> <p>In addition he noted that the FPDC would establish an estates strategy group (ESG) – reporting to the FPDC – with the brief of developing an estates and environmental framework to help the Board’s future decision making.</p> <p>The ESG would present its initial findings and recommendations at the Strategy Session on 7 October.</p>		
9	<p>Next Planned Board: 13 December</p> <p>Strategy Saturday: 7 October</p>		



14th December 2023

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chair of Governors



Call-Over Meeting: 12 July on-line

Library Refurbishment: (cost after VE, funding and Crowndale Rd conditions survey)

Apologies:

(Alexi Marmot, Alice Rubbra, Tom Robins, Max Silver, June Jarrett, Neli Garner, Samata Khatoon).

There were no declarations of interest.

GS introduced the meeting: he advised that the purpose of the meeting was to consider whether to proceed with the library in the current opportunity window (summer 2023).

The FPDC and the Board had requested further information which had been included in the papers for the meeting.:

- Revised project cost: reduced to £327k incl fees and VAT
- GLA (Skills for Londoners, SfL) grant funding (ringfenced to “WMC Plus concept”: OLC, Library and Maurice Hall)
- Conditions Survey: presentation by Richard Dearing - further surveys to determine costs.

The Board noted that the GLA Sfl funding was conditional on a College match of 2:1, and that availability of monies was time-limited incurring forfeiture if not expended in designated time periods. The Board also noted that the position of the College in bidding for future capital funds could be jeopardized unless monies previously allocated had been expended.

Library:

The Board had a lengthy discussion with each member present having the opportunity to express their view and the views of those absent relayed by GS and JS.

The Board thanked MR and RD for their work since the Board on 4th July to clarify many of the details around cost and funding.

The Board agreed to proceed with the refurbishment in the period from July 2023 – January 2024 at (£327k)

Other matters – summer 2023:

44 Crowndale Rd: sky light, entrance lift, fire doors,

Other matters for consideration in development of the Estates Strategy:

no 48 Crowndale Rd –(x3 residential flats)
KT lease and maintenance

The Board agreed that works at 44 Crowndale Rd up to c£80k (in addition to the Library cost) should be progressed over the summer.

The Board noted that continuing and iterative investment in the building would be required to maintain the competitive attraction of the building, to safeguard (H&S, well-being) learners and staff and to reduce the risk of unplanned and costly reactive maintenance in future years.

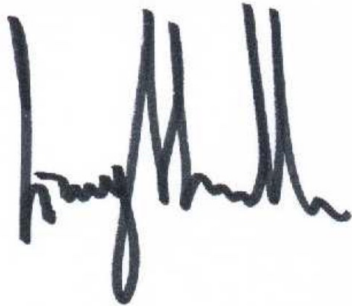
The Board recognized that the levels of investment required may have to be funded in part from reserves. Members also noted that the reserves would be rightly used for these purposes in furtherance of the WM College’s charitable aims.

AoB.

Budget 2023/24 Revision:

An additional £15k expenditure had been identified as omitted from the base presented to Board on 04 July. This would increase the deficit from £260k to £275k but would have no adverse impact on the EBITDA rating “good”.

This amendment was agreed.



Signed: _____ Dare: ____ 14 December 2023

Chair of Governors